



The Federation of The Downs & Northbourne Church of England Primary Schools



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School Attendance Policy

I am writing to explain the school's expectations in relation to attendance and remind you that our federation Attendance Policy can be viewed via our school website, www.downs.kent.sch.uk. If you are unable to access the online copy and would like a printed copy then please contact the school office. Our attendance information guide for parents and carers is also enclosed in your pack and includes important advice and information on a range of attendance matters.

It is an Ofsted requirement that each child attends school at least 96% of the time. If a school falls below this requirement then it can greatly impact on the schools ability to be classified as outstanding, which is certainly where we as a school, aim to be. As a federation it is our desire that our whole school attendance is at 97% or above and we ask our parents/guardians to work with us to achieve that goal.

Should your child be too unwell to attend school, it is vital that you inform the school office each day of absence by calling 01304 372486. Alternatively a text can be sent via our 'School Gateway' app. More information on this can be found on our website under the 'parent news' tab.

Where we are informed of a child's illness or medical appointment we will mark those absences as I = Illness or M = Medical on the child's attendance record. Where there has been no contact we are obliged to record the absences as unauthorised absences and they will be marked as 0 = Unauthorised. Finally unauthorised holidays taken during term time are recorded code G = Unauthorised Family Holiday. The school cannot authorise term time absences for the purpose of a holiday and can only authorise other term time absences in exceptional circumstances.

The Attendance Policy includes the Local Authority guidelines on the use and issue of Penalty Notices in relation to unauthorised pupil absence. This covers all unauthorised absences including holiday taken during term time and periods of sickness where the school has not been informed at the time of the absence. Where attendance has become problematic the school will in the first instance aim to work with families to resolve matters before it becomes necessary for a Penalty Notice to be issued but parents should be aware that the Local Authority has recently changed the threshold for the issue of a Penalty Notice. Where a child has 10 or more unauthorised sessions of absence (5 days - as each day consists of a morning and afternoon session) in any 100 school sessions this may result in the issue of a Penalty Notice.

Please note Penalty Notices can be issued retrospectively by the Local Authority in the event that a family take an unauthorised holiday during term time but inform the school office that their child is too unwell to attend school but it subsequently becomes apparent they had been on a term time holiday.

To help you understand the impact of missed attendance it is our policy to write to parents/guardians at the end of each term should a child have less than 90% school attendance and then, if attendance does not improve, we will arrange a meeting with them to discuss the reasons. Continuing poor attendance after the school's support and intervention may result in the matter being referred to the School Liaison Officer for further action. I would ask that if I can be of any assistance helping with attendance matters then please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Mr M Turner
Family Liaison and Attendance Officer.

